

VZCZCXRO4747
RR RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHNC #0046/01 0260635
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 260635Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9525
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1321
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NICOSIA 000046

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/18/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UNFICYP](#) [CY](#) [UK](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: CYPRUS: LOCAL BRITS LAUD CHANGE IN TONE

REF: A. NICOSIA 28
[1](#)B. NICOSIA 36

Classified By: Ambassador Frank C. Urbancic, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: In moving from earlier debates on procedure to real substantive give-and-take, the Cypriot leaders had progressed far, UK High Commissioner Peter Millett and visiting EUR Deputy Assistant Secretary Matthew Bryza agreed on January 14. Mehmet Ali Talat and Demetris Christofias's long friendship, as well as the relative paucity of detail-mad lawyers amongst their top-level advisers, also boded well for negotiating success. Britain intended to support the process from the sidelines much like the U.S., but was not averse to weighing in on substance if it felt that one side or the other's positions were extreme, Millett revealed. Her Majesty's Government did not intend to name a Cyprus envoy, however. Cyprus was playing a dangerous game on Turkey's EU accession path, the British diplomat reckoned, hoping to apply maximum pressure on Ankara in the months before the December Council review. Continuing on Brussels-related matters, Millett believed the Commission must take a more active role in the Cyprus settlement discussions. END SUMMARY.

Going Great Guns, Compared to 2006

[1](#)2. (C) Millett had met with Bryza during the latter's last visit to Cyprus in July 2006. The two men agreed that advances made in the intervening 30 months were palpable. "In 2006, we couldn't get past process," Millett explained. Then-G/C leader Tassos Papadopoulos was doing his best impersonation of Rauf Denktash, the long-time "TRNC president" famed for his stubbornness. Both were now departed from the Cypriot political scene, a positive development. Leaders Talat and Christofias enjoyed similar ideologies and a reasonably warm personal relationship, Millett noted. They realized a settlement plan must be sellable on both sides, meaning that total victory for one was not desirable. And their teams, at least at the highest levels, were free of legal whizzes like Papadopoulos and Denktash, always ready to kill promising proposals on nit-picky grounds.

[1](#)3. (C) Not all was rosy in the talks, Millett appraised; the pace, for example, was glacial, and the UN was proposing measures to speed it up. He was unsure whether Christofias and Iacovou would accept a modified framework, mainly because G/C domestic politics favored a go-slow approach. Christofias understood the electoral calendar in northern Cyprus worked against a settlement, however, and that only Talat, amongst T/C leaders, could deliver a deal acceptable to Greek Cypriots.

Britain's Thoughts on Going Forward

14. (C) Millett turned next to HMG's tactics in supporting the talks, taking note of Bryza's remark that Washington likely would not name a Cyprus Special Envoy in this phase of talks. The Hellenic lobby in Britain for months had been pushing the government to nominate its own envoy, but now had stood down. They likely had been satisfied by UK Europe Minister Caroline Flint's statement that a Cyprus settlement was amongst her three highest priorities.

15. (C) On-island, Millett believed the international community might best support the talks with careful cheerleading. The leaders must become more comfortable with each other, he added, and must realize the internationals have great expectations of them to actually reach a deal. Britain would not remain quiet and neutral regarding substantive elements of the negotiation, however. Millett pointed to two specific proposals which looked unworkable -- the T/Cs' demand that the constituent states enjoy broad treaty-making powers, and the G/C position that the president and vice-president be elected on a common ticket. On these and similarly controversial matters, the British would not hesitate in making their opinions known to UN Special Adviser Alexander Downer and the rest of the UNFICYP team.

Brussels on My Mind

16. (C) Millett worried that Turkish Cypriot leadership

NICOSIA 00000046 002 OF 002

lacked fundamental knowledge of how Brussels functioned. Their limited understanding resulted in demands in the negotiations inconsistent with the European Union Acquis, such as permanent derogations on settlement and capital flows. He believed the European Commission must become more involved in the process, "politically, technically, and financially." The UK was working hard to get a Commission official seconded to Downer's team.

17. (C) Christofias, too, seemingly was misplaying his hand in Brussels. By casting virtual vetoes over additional Acquis chapter openings and continuing to bad-mouth Ankara's CyProb intransigence, the President was attempting to apply ever-greater pressure on Turkey in the run-up to the European Council's December accession assessment. "That's a very dangerous game," Millett ventured.

18. (U) DAS Bryza has cleared this message.
Urbancic